

Ingredient substitutions: Make the switch for healthier recipes

By Mayo Clinic staff

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Cook up healthier recipes by swapping one ingredient for another. These substitution tips can help.

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You stock healthy foods in your pantry, but what do you do with them? And how do you modify favorite family recipes so that they're more in line with your healthy-eating plan? It's not as hard as you may think. The key is to incorporate healthier alternatives into your daily eating routine.

The following suggestions can help you lower fat, salt, sugar and calories and increase fiber in your recipes.

If your recipe calls for:	Try substituting:
All-purpose (plain) flour	Whole-wheat flour for half of the called-for all-purpose flour in baked goods Note: Whole-wheat pastry flour is less dense and works well in softer products like cakes and muffins.
Bacon	Canadian bacon, turkey bacon, smoked turkey or lean prosciutto (Italian ham)
Butter, shortening or oil in baked goods	Applesauce or prune puree for half of the called-for butter, shortening or oil Note: To avoid dense, soggy or flat baked goods, don't substitute oil for butter or shortening.

Butter, margarine, shortening or oil to prevent sticking	Cooking spray or nonstick pans
Creamed soups	Fat-free milk-based soups, mashed potato flakes, or pureed carrots, potatoes or tofu for thickening agents
Dry bread crumbs	Rolled oats or crushed bran cereal
Eggs	Two egg whites or 1/4 cup egg substitute for each whole egg
Enriched pasta	Whole-wheat pasta
Evaporated milk	Evaporated skim milk
Fruit canned in heavy syrup	Fruit canned in its own juices or in water, or fresh fruit
Fruit-flavored yogurt	Plain yogurt with fresh fruit slices
Full-fat cream cheese	Fat-free or low-fat cream cheese, Neufchatel or low-fat cottage cheese pureed until smooth
Full-fat sour cream	Fat-free or low-fat sour cream, plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt
Ground beef	Extra-lean or lean ground beef, chicken or turkey breast (make sure no poultry skin has been added to the product)
Iceberg lettuce	Arugula, chicory, collard greens, dandelion greens, kale, mustard greens, spinach or watercress
Margarine in baked goods	Trans fat-free butter spreads or shortenings that are specially formulated for baking Note: If ingredient lists include the term "partially hydrogenated," it may have up to 0.5 grams of trans fat in one serving. To avoid dense, soggy or flat baked goods, don't substitute diet, whipped or tub-style margarine for regular margarine.
Mayonnaise	Reduced-calorie mayonnaise-type salad dressing or reduced-calorie, reduced-fat mayonnaise

Meat as the main ingredient	Three times as many vegetables as the meat on pizzas or in casseroles, soups and stews
Oil-based marinades	Wine, balsamic vinegar, fruit juice or fat-free broth
Salad dressing	Fat-free or reduced-calorie dressing or flavored vinegars
Seasoning salt, such as garlic salt, celery salt or onion salt	Herb-only seasonings, such as garlic powder, celery seed or onion flakes, or use finely chopped herbs or garlic, celery or onions
Soups, sauces, dressings, crackers, or canned meat, fish or vegetables	Low-sodium or reduced-sodium versions
Soy sauce	Sweet-and-sour sauce, hot mustard sauce or low-sodium soy sauce
Syrup	Pureed fruit, such as applesauce, or low-calorie, sugar-free syrup
Table salt	Herbs, spices, fruit juices or salt-free seasoning mixes or herb blends
White bread	Whole-wheat bread
White rice	Brown rice, wild rice, bulgur or pearl barley
Whole milk	Reduced-fat or fat-free milk

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